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TWO LENAPE STONE MASKS FROM PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY

BY

ALANSON SKINNER

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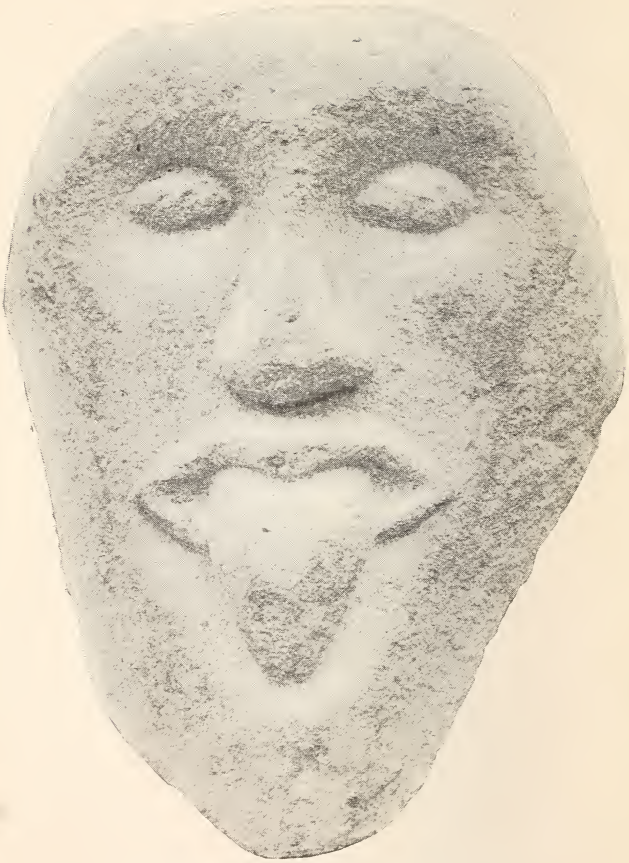

LENAPE STONE MASK FROM PENNSYLVANIA

TWO LENAPE STONE MASKS FROM PENNSYLVANIA AND NEW JERSEY

By Alanson Skinner

THE mask shown in pl. 1, with its grimacing face and protruding tongue, was washed out by a freshet on the site of the Lenape or Delaware Indian village of Wyalusing, on the Susquehanna, a settlement destroyed by Continental soldiers under Colonel Hartley in 1778, because it had been a rallying place for Indian hostiles and Tories.

The face of the mask shows evidence of having been made with the aid of both stone and metallic tools, and its lolling tongue is further evidence of its historic origin, since this feature is in imitation of a familiar type of the well-known Iroquois false-face.

While the exact use to which this object has been put is in doubt, it is known that the modern Lenape Indians still possess wooden dolls which they style "guardians of health" and to which annual sacrifices are made to insure the welfare of the tribe They also believe in a being called "The Living Solid Face," who controls the beasts of the forest and governs the chase. In the annual ceremony this personage is represented by a shaman wearing a heavy wooden mask. No doubt this object from Wyalusing represents one or the other of these deities, specimens of both of which are to be seen in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation.

Only a few Lenape masks or heads of stone are known. The finest of these was found at Grasmere, Staten Island, New York, many years ago, and is now in the Museum of the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences. Another came from Trenton, New Jersey, and a third from Monmouth county in the same state.

A crude face pecked in a bowlder (pl. II) was collected by Rev. Dr William R.

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LENAPE STONE MASK FROM NEW JERSEY

Blackie on Minisink island in upper Delaware river, and was presented by him to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. Another of the same type was found also by Dr Blackie and is in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City.

Consult: ABBOTT, C. C., Primitive Industry, p. 394, Salem, Mass., 1881. SKINNER, A., (1) Indians of Greater New York, p. 117, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1915. (2) Preliminary Report of the Archæological Survey of New Jersey, p. 32, *Bulletin 9, Geological Survey of New Jersey*, Trenton, 1913. WILSON, Thomas, Prehistoric Art, *Annual Report of the U. S. National Museum for 1896*, p. 481, pl. 52, Washington, 1898.

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